

System Maturity and Resources surveys for Configurational Comparative Analysis: Frequently Asked Questions



September 2026

1. Why are we asking Place Partnerships to complete these surveys?

[Configurational Comparative Analysis](#) (CCA) is a research method that can combine both qualitative and quantitative data and enables us to compare patterns across a large number of Places and identify which conditions, or combinations of conditions, tend to lead to a desired outcome. By combining this with the deeper insight taken from Evaluation and Learning reports we can explore how and why change takes place in these contexts.

The System Maturity Matrix (SMM) survey, using an online format, enables systematic data collection, helping to consistently capture an understanding of the current conditions within Places. This will draw on both perceptions of partners and stakeholders and examples of local contexts and the changes taking place. NELP will use each Place's responses to both **the System Maturity survey and the Resources Survey** for its CCA.

Please note: responses to the Resources survey will be shared with Sport England (SE), but the SM survey responses will not be shared with SE, without permission of the appropriate Place partnership representative. Aggregated data and patterns of maturity across Places, based on SMM responses will be shared with SE.

Further information on CCA is available on our website [here](#), along with the [survey guidance](#).

2. Is my Place expected to participate in the CCA data collection?

Evaluation and learning requirements are proportionate to the type of Place investment received. The table below sets out the submissions required for each investment type during the Autumn 2026 reporting period.

Note: Development Award Place Participation

Place partnerships currently in receipt of Development award are invited but not required to participate in CCA.

If the decision is to not participate in CCA, the development award place is required to produce and share an Autumn Evaluation and Learning Submission.

Place Universal Offer

We encourage PUO Places to use the SMM as a reflective and developmental tool. With the increase in place expansion places participating in CCA this year, we regret that there is not scope for PUO places to also participate in CCA this year (unless they participated in 2025).

	Local Evaluation and Learning Submission	CCA Resources and System Maturity Surveys
Timescale	Autumn 2026	Autumn 2026
Deepening and Full Award (funded prior to 1st September 2026)	No	Yes
Dev Award Participating in CCA*	No	Yes
Dev Award not Participating in CCA*	Yes	No
Place Universal Offer	Yes	No

3. When is the deadline to submit our completed survey?

You will need to submit a completed online survey by the end of 11th November 2026.

4. Will I have to complete the survey in one go?

Each Place will have a unique survey link that will save your progress as you complete the survey. This allows you to close the survey and return to it at a later point without losing the information submitted.

5. Can more than one person in a Place fill in the survey?

We recommend one/two people completes the final survey submission. You will be provided with a survey link that is unique to your Place. However, your response should be based on input from stakeholders across the Place – **see question 5**.

6. Should we include data from a range of stakeholders in our completed survey?

Before you complete the survey, we recommend engaging with a range of stakeholders from your Place to collate data/examples to help you complete the survey. It is important to gather a diverse range of perspectives and experiences of the Place-based Systemic Approach to PA in your Place. Further recommendations and resources for engaging stakeholders in the process are included in the [CCA survey guidance](#).

7. What do we mean by a Place?

We consider each Place as the Local Authority area in which it operates. Therefore, if you are representing multiple Places, you should complete one survey per Place. For example, if an Active Partnership represent three different Local Authority areas, they will submit three separate sets of survey responses. Each Place will be provided with unique survey links to complete the Resources and System Maturity surveys.

8. Do I need to complete all the System Maturity conditions?

We ask you to submit a response for all conditions, but we recognise that some conditions may be less relevant or less well developed in your Place and therefore have less examples/data

available than others. Please include an explanation for your assessment for each condition, supported where possible with examples, to enable the NELP team to understand your survey response.

9. How much information/ how many examples do I need to include?

It is important that responses reflect the experiences and perceptions of a range of stakeholders in the Place. Please provide a short explanation of your reasoning for your maturity assessment, including consideration of contextual conditions as well as the activity taking place in this field and include examples to demonstrate this. Contextual conditions may relate to the demographics and histories of the Place, and/or the organisational relationships and contexts within which this work is taking place. Your examples may come from community organisations, operational teams, and senior leaders in your Place. One example may relate to more than one condition, and we do not need detailed descriptions, but rather a brief explanation of what is happening or has happened, and how this relates to the particular system maturity conditions. Please aim to keep to a maximum of 500 words for each sub-condition.

10. What should we do if there is no agreement of the maturity rating between stakeholders.

The maturity rating should reflect the overall Place, so it is important that examples are collected from a range of stakeholders in the Place. The maturity rating should reflect the data and examples gathered during this process so if there is not a clear agreement on the scoring it may be beneficial for a few people with detailed understanding of the work to review the data available and decide on an appropriate rating. The NELP team will also look across cases and moderate the ratings based on a range of information and examples.

11. Can we collect and submit responses in another format?

Some people may find it easier to capture and collate information in another format such as Word or Excel, and that's fine, but we would ask you to copy the information into the online survey response to enable us to process it effectively. If you have any technical difficulties with using the online survey, please contact us by email: nelp@shu.ac.uk

For any further information please contact: nelp@shu.ac.uk